



Tim Connor <tjconnor56@gmail.com>

My questions for you, in writing

Tim Connor <tjconnor56@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 5, 2023 at 12:14 PM

To: "French, Al" <AFRENCH@spokanecounty.org>

Bcc: Tim Connor <tjconnor56@gmail.com>

Dear Al:

I am submitting these questions to you in writing (per your invitation) but with the caveat, of course, that I'd much prefer an actual interview. As you can see I've tried to premise my questions on common knowledge and what I've learned in my research and interviews to date. My hope is to incorporate your answers into an article I'm planning for next week, so I would appreciate your answers by Monday, December 11th.

Concerning your role as a member of the Spokane International Airport board of directors—

1) In June 2017 groundwater monitoring at Spokane International Airport confirmed the elevated presence of PFAS chemicals in water samples. The significance of these results was communicated in a November 22, 2017 memo from SIA public affairs director Todd Woodard to board Secretary Jennifer West and CEO Larry Krauter. You were an SIA board member at that time (2017) and also the county commissioner from the district encompassing the West Plains.

- Did Mr. Woodard, or Ms. West, or CEO Krauter inform you that PFAS had been found in SIA groundwater?

—If you were not informed, do you believe you should have been notified?

—If you were informed, what steps did you take to ensure that local/regional public health officials and/or the Washington Department of Ecology were informed about the PFAS contaminated groundwater at SIA?

Concerning your role as a member of the Spokane Board of County Commissioners—

2) After the initial news of PFAS in West Plains groundwater in the spring of 2017, several private well owners in the Palisades area north of Spokane International Airport began sampling and finding elevated levels of PFAS in their water. In late 2019 an informal working group, including county water resource specialists, learned of a ~\$450,000 grant opportunity through the State Department of Ecology to fund a West Plains PFAS Groundwater Transport & Fate study. The project has the potential for providing valuable information about the source(s) of PFAS in West Plains

groundwater and discerning the pathways of the contamination—information that could expedite and improve the effectiveness of efforts to locate the sources of PFAS contamination and treat the contaminated water. Per Ecology's requirements, a local entity was required as a fiscal agency to manage the grant funds. Officials involved in developing that grant request have told me that Spokane County was well qualified to manage the grant and the obvious choice to do so. They corroborate the recent Seattle Times story (see below) which reported that Spokane County was the first entity approached to be the local, fiscal agency for the \$450,000 state grant. They say the proposal to have the County manage the grant was prepared for County Commissioner approval, but that you intervened to keep it off the board's agenda.

- Were you aware of the study and the effort to secure the Spokane County Commission's approval to manage the grant funds?
- Did you actively oppose placing the grant management request on the County Commissioner's agenda? And, if so, why?

- In their October 29th issue, the Seattle Times published a lengthy [article](#) on PFAS contamination in West Plains groundwater. Near the end of the story the newspaper reported that you cited pending "litigation" as the reason you cited for not answering at least some of the newspaper's questions on the subject.


- Is the Times' reporting accurate?—that you cited "litigation" as the reason not to answer further questions about the PFAS contamination? If so, can you tell me what litigation you were referring to?

3) On July 19, 2022 a handful of Palisades area residents involved in a neighborhood improvement group—Friends of Palisades—met with you to discuss the PFAS groundwater contamination problem and seek your support for the West Plains PFAS Groundwater Transport & Fate study. I'm told that a result of the meeting is that you told the group that you supported the study and would take action to see that the grant funds were secured to support it.

- Is that accurate?
- If so, can you describe the actions you took, subsequently, to help secure the \$450,000 grant to fund the study?

sincere regards, Tim Connor
<https://timothyconnor.substack.com/>

attached PDF (Woodard memo, 11/22/17) pertinent to question #1

 **Woodard 11:22:17 MEMO.pdf**
913K